

# The Legend of LALITADITYA

A vibrant illustration of a Rajasthani warrior in a blue tunic and golden crown, holding a sword aloft. He is surrounded by onlookers in a desert landscape under a dramatic, colorful sky. The scene is set against a backdrop of rolling hills and a bright, hazy horizon.

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## **The Legend of LALITADITYA**

Of all the kingdoms in ancient India, Kashmir alone has the unique advantage of possessing a written history from very early times. This Sanskrit work in verse called **RAJATARANGINI** (RIVER OF KINGS) was written by Kalhana in the 12th century. Our Chitra Katha on Lalitaditya is based on Kalhana's records.

Lalitaditya ruled over Kashmir from A.D. 724 to 760. During his reign the kingdom of Kashmir became the most powerful empire in India. If Lalitaditya had not ascended the throne of Kashmir in the 8th century, India probably would have been overrun by alien marauders much earlier.

Very little is known about his end. After he left Kashmir all links with him were severed. According to the speculations recorded in **RAJATARANGINI**, however, Lalitaditya either froze to death in Afghanistan or ascended a burning pyre to protect his honour in a moment of crisis or entered the land of the Gods.

\*

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# The Legend of LALITADITYA

AFTER THE FALL OF THE GUPTA EMPIRE, NORTHERN INDIA IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY BROKE UP INTO MINOR PRINCIPALITIES WHICH WERE ALWAYS AT WAR WITH ONE ANOTHER...



...WHILE IN TIBET THE BHATTAS WERE TRAINING FOR INVASION...



...AND ON THE WESTERN FRONT, THE ARAB MARAUDERS WERE PLANNING FOR PLUNDER.



GOLD AND RICHES AWAIT US IN HINDUSTAN. THEY ARE OURS FOR THE TAKING.

ON TO HINDUSTAN!



...BUT FOR ONE MAN - LALITADITYA THE RULER OF KASHMIR. LALITADITYA HAD IN HIS MINISTER, MITRA SHARMA, A WISE AND ALERT ADVISER.

MAHARAJ, MUMMUNI THE ARAB IS ABOUT TO ENTER KANGRA.



MUMMUNI, THE MOST ADVENTUROUS AND CRAFTY OF THEM, WOULD HAVE HAD HIS GOLD AND RICHES...

\* TIBETANS



AND THERE IS NO  
SIGN OF THE HELP  
THAT WAS TO  
COME FROM  
CHINA.

THEN, WE  
SHALL DEPEND  
ON OUR OWN  
STRENGTH AND  
COURAGE—NEITHER  
OF WHICH WE  
LACK.

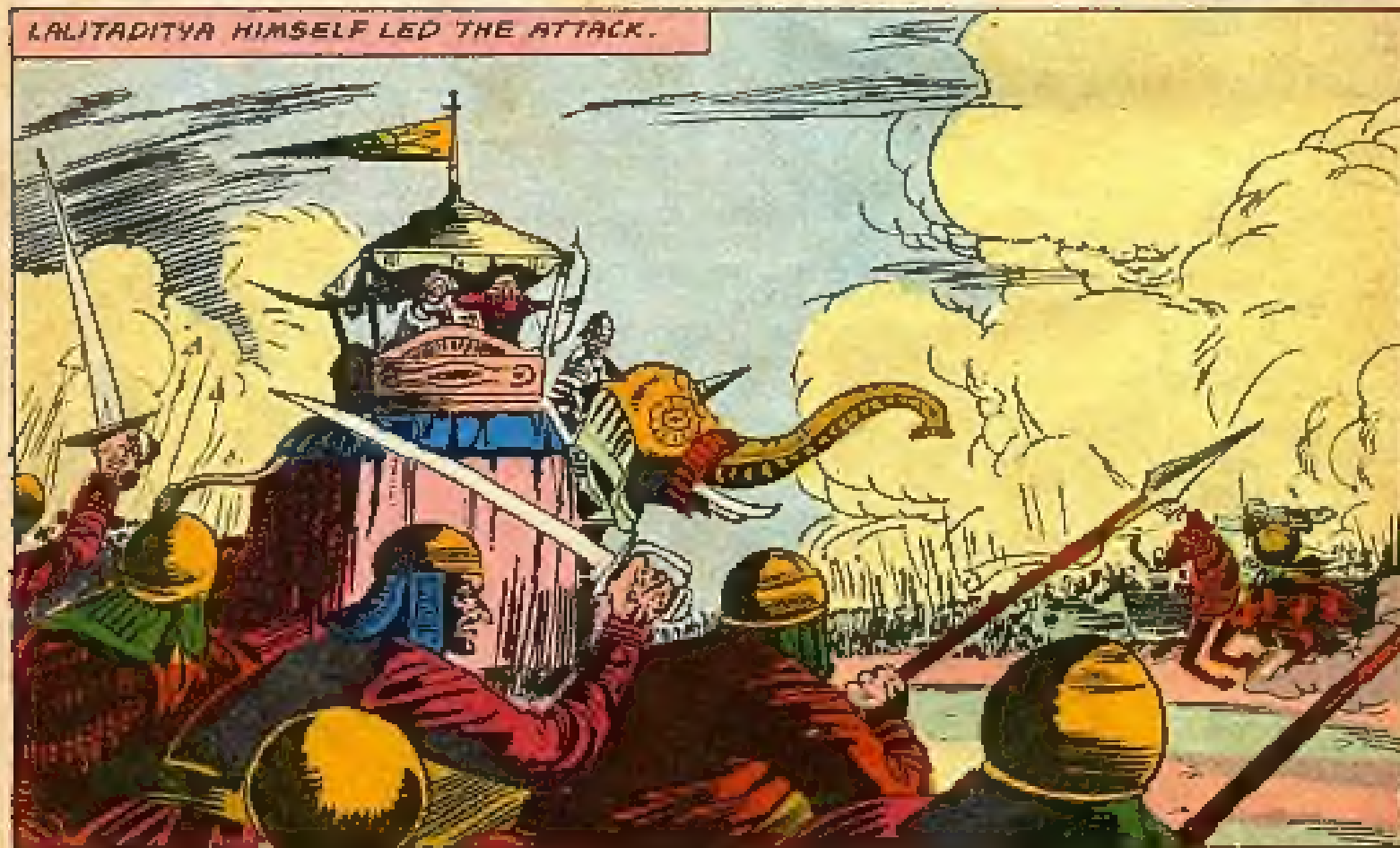
JUST THEN A MESSENGER  
ARRIVED.

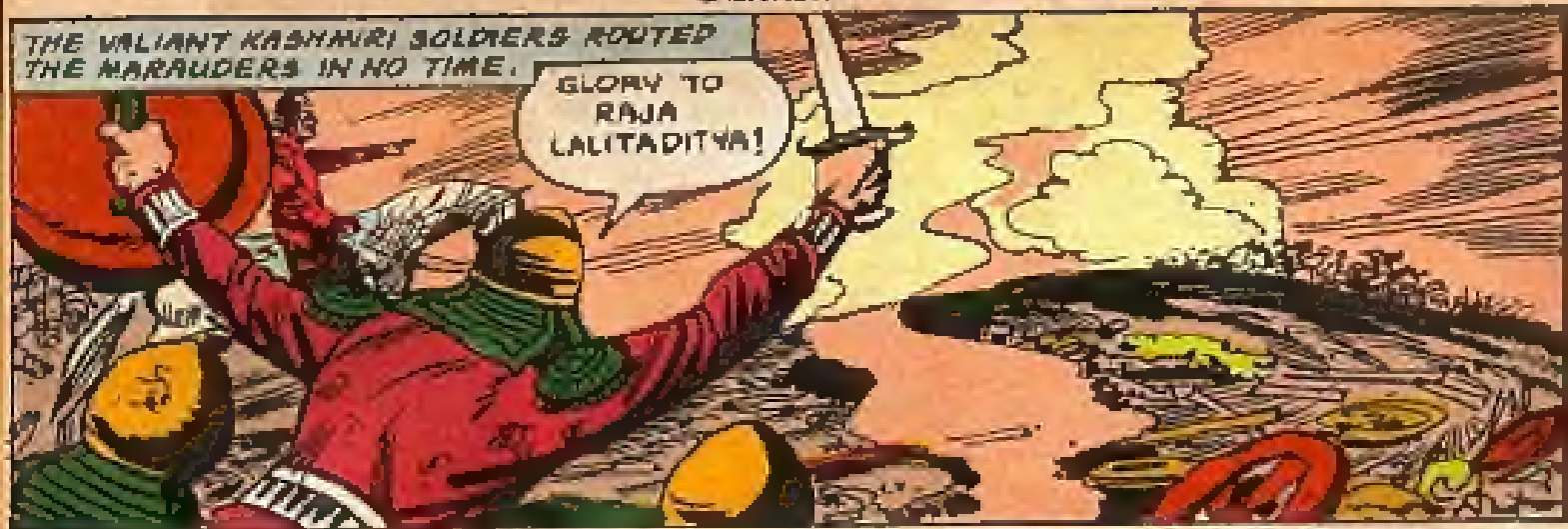
MAHARAJ, MUMMUNI  
HAS SENT ONE DIVISION  
OF HIS ARMY TO  
KANYAKUBJA\* AND IS  
MARCHING TOWARDS  
OUR CITY WITH THE  
OTHER.

GOOD. THAT WILL MAKE  
OUR TASK EASIER. WE  
SHALL ATTACK HIM AND  
MAKE SURE HE THINKS  
TWICE BEFORE SETTING  
FOOT ON OUR SOIL  
AGAIN.



LALITADITYA HIMSELF LED THE ATTACK.





FILL IT TO THE BRIM. YES, PRAVARA-  
PURA IS A FINE CITY, INDEED. BUT  
IT CANNOT COMPARE WITH MY  
PARINAGAPURA.

BUT  
MAHARAJ...



...EVEN POETS SAY  
THERE IS NO CITY ON  
EARTH LIKE  
PRAVARAPURA.



THEN  
THEY  
LIE!



GENERAL! BURN  
DOWN THIS CITY!  
REDUCE IT TO  
ASHES BEFORE  
DAWN!



OH GOD! WHAT  
NOW, MITRA  
SHARMA?

WELL...  
DIDN'T YOU  
HEAR THE  
KING'S  
COMMAND? THE  
CITY WILL HAVE  
TO BURN.







HE SENT AT ONCE FOR MITRA SHARMA.

WAS... WAS THE ORDER I ISSUED LAST NIGHT CARRIED OUT?

YES, MAHARAJ.



I SUPERVISED THE OPERATIONS MYSELF, TO MAKE SURE THAT NOTHING WENT WRONG.

OH, NO! WHY DID YOU?



I WAS NOT MYSELF... IT WAS THE WINE... YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER, MITRA SHARMA...

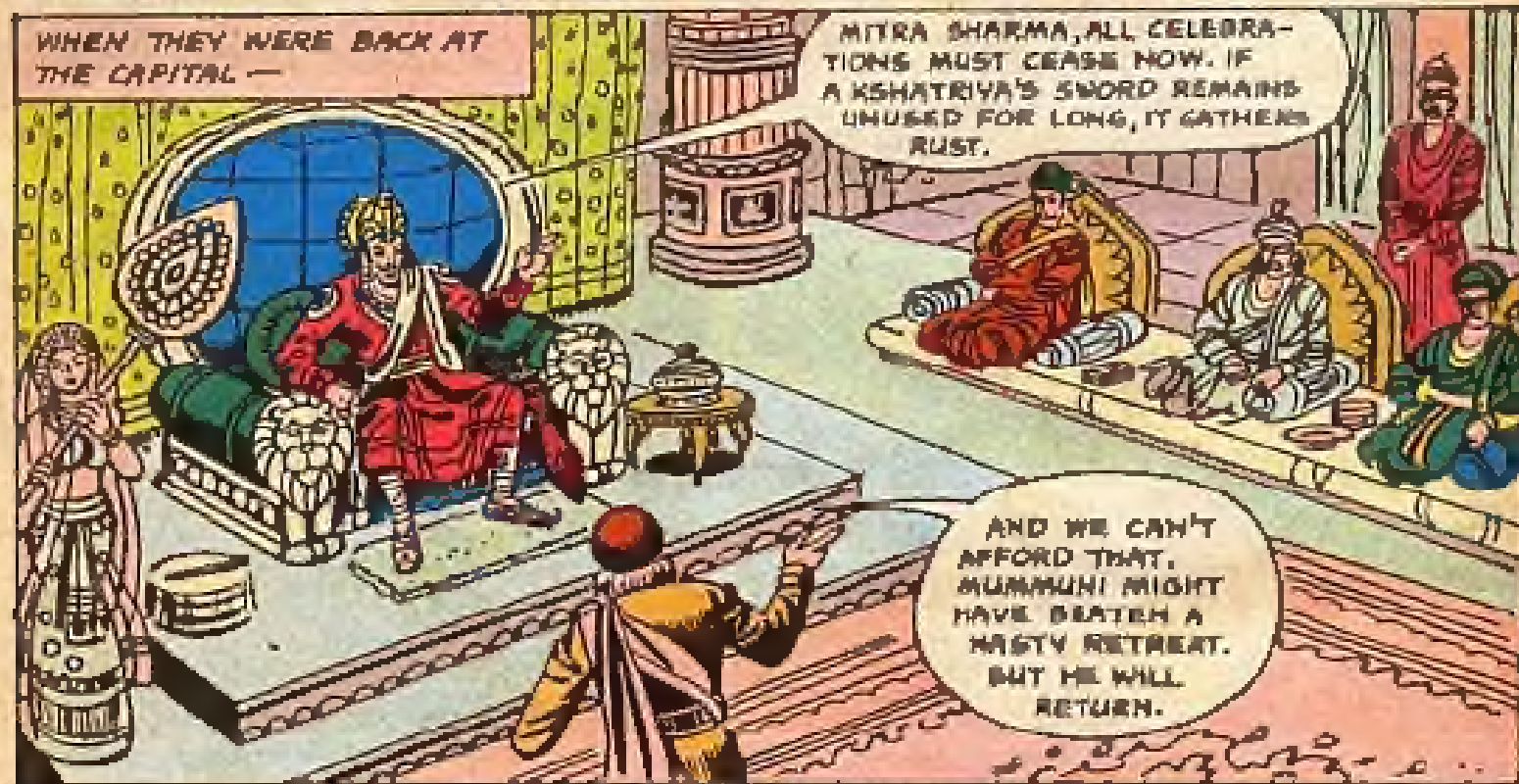
I ONLY KNOW THAT THE KING'S ORDERS MUST BE OBEYED.

NO! NOT WHEN WINE HAS DEPRIVED HIM OF HIS SENSES.









IN 'ADITYA'S DOLAIA' BELGA  
WITH THE SLAUGHTER OF THE HILL  
& BIG IN ANSHAMIA ARE THE  
LAKHS THE KAMAHONAS  
AND THE TURKHAS

IN THE LAND OF THE TURKHAS OR TURKS,  
LALITADITYA CAME ACROSS AN EXTREMELY  
INTELLIGENT TURK BUDDHIST NAMED  
HAKULH

WHY WILL  
BELONG ONE  
OF MY  
MINISTERS,  
(HANDLING)

IT WOULD  
BE AN HONOUR  
TO SERVE A  
MONARCH  
LIKE YOU

AFTER THIS CAMPAIGN  
LALITADITYA TURNED HIS  
ATTENTION TOWARDS  
THE KINGS OF THE PLAINS  
OF NORTH INDIA. IN THE  
THE KING OF KANYAKUBJA  
WAS THE MOST POWERFUL

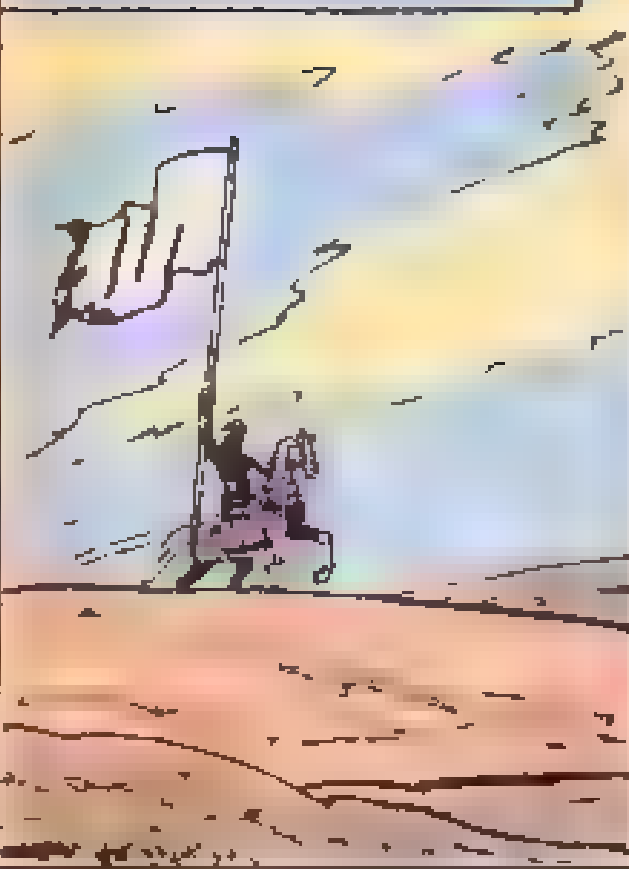
OUR ARMS ARE WELL  
MATCHED, MITHA SHAKMA  
WE HAVE THE UPPER  
HAND NO DOUBT BUT THE  
SOLDERS OF KANYAKUBJA  
ARE NO MEAN  
WARRIORS

ISN'T IT A  
PITY THAT THEY  
HAVE TO BE  
SLAIN?

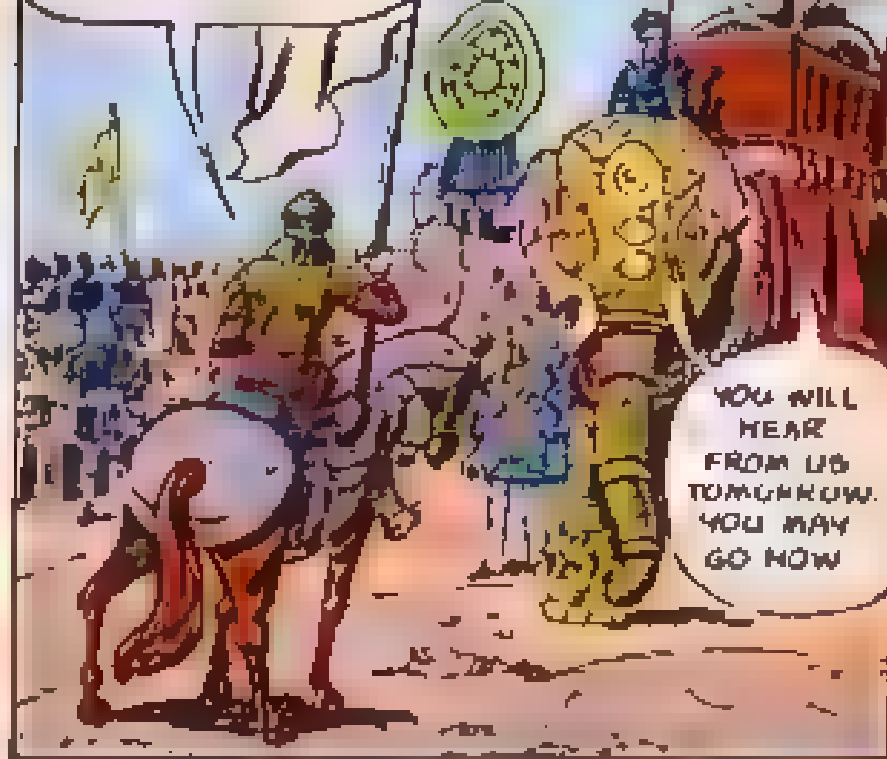
THAT LIES IN  
OUR HANDS AS  
DECLARED WAR  
SO SHALL CALL  
FOR PEACE



A MESSENGER CARRIED LALITADITYA'S PEACE PROPOSALS TO THE OPPOSITE CAMP



EMPEROR LALITADITYA WANTS YOU TO SIGN A TREATY OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TO PUT AN END TO THIS WANTON BLOODSHED

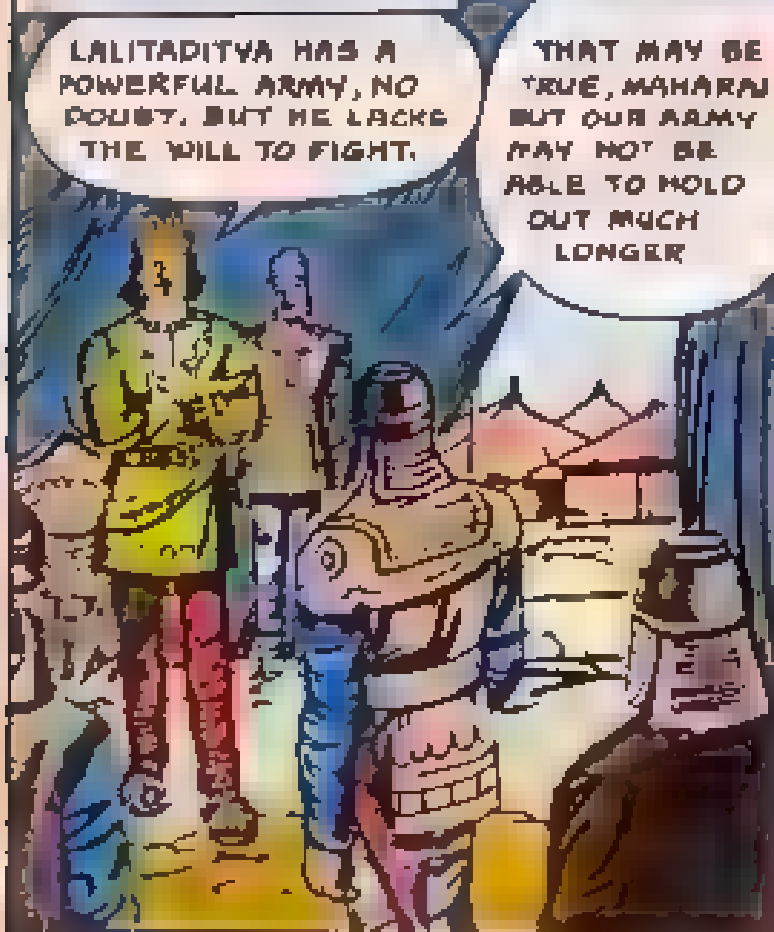


YOU WILL HEAR FROM US TOMORROW. YOU MAY GO NOW

LATER WHEN YASHOVARMAN CONFERRED WITH HIS GENERAL —

LALITADITYA HAS A POWERFUL ARMY, NO DOUBT. BUT HE LACKS THE WILL TO FIGHT.

THAT MAY BE TRUE, MAHARAJ. BUT OUR ARMY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER



YASHOVARMAN TURNED TO HIS MINISTER.

WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

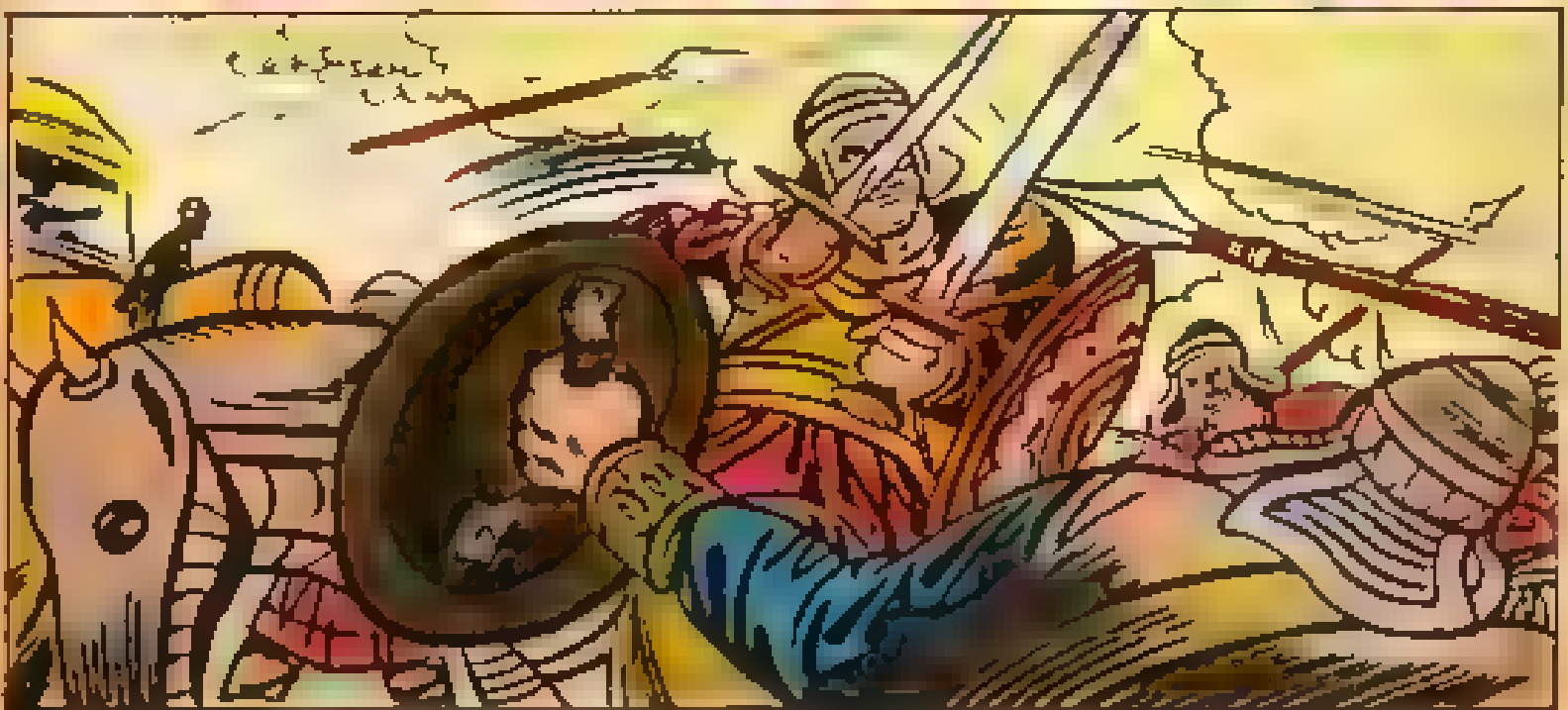
LET US SIGN THE TREATY, MAHARAJ. I WILL DRAFT IT TO OUR ADVANTAGE



THE NEXT DAY -

IT'S BEING THE  
TREATY OF PEACE  
CONCLUDED BETWEEN  
MAHARAJA YASHOVARMAN  
AND MAHARAJA  
LALITADITYA

I BEG YOUR PARDON,  
MINISTER SHOULDN'T IT  
REAR BETWEEN MAHARAJA  
LALITADITYA AND MAHARAJA  
YASHOVARMAN... OUR  
EMPEROR BEING THE MORE  
POWERFUL OF THE TWO



YASHOVARMAN WAS DEFEATED AND  
TAKEN CAPTIVE.

SEE WHERE YOUR CRAFTINESS HAS LED  
YOU, YASHOVARMAN. YOU, WHO WERE  
ONCE SERVED BY THE ILLUSTRIOUS  
POETS BHAVABHUTI AND VAKPATI, MUST  
NOW SING EMPEROR LALITADITYA'S  
PRAISES LIKE A  
COMMON MINSTREL



LATER —

OUR EMPEROR  
NOW BECOMES THE  
OVERLORD OF ALL  
THE KINGS WHO  
ACCEPTED  
YASHOVARMAN'S  
SUZERAINTY



TRUE  
BUT ARE  
THEY  
AWAKE  
OF IT?

CHANKUN IS RIGHT.  
THEY MAY CONSIDER  
THEMSELVES  
INDEPENDENT NOW.  
WE MUST MARCH  
OUT AND ESTABLISH  
OUR AUTHORITY



BENGAL WAS OVERRUN WITHOUT A FIGHT.  
AFTER CONQUERING PAL NAG AND ANNEXING  
ALL THE TERRITORY AS FAR AS THE  
EASTERN SEA.





...LALITADITYA TURNED SOUTH-WEST  
WHERE OPEN RATTA OF KARNATA'S  
SURRENDERED WITHOUT OFFERING ANY  
RESISTANCE

AM GRATEFUL TO YOUR  
GRACIOUS QUEEN BY WHOM  
WE HAVE PREVENTED  
UNNECESSARY LOSS OF  
LIVES

CHANKUN, THE  
PRESIDENT HERE  
WAS A  
MEMORIAL A  
UNIQUE MEMO-  
RIAL

LEAVE IT  
TO ME  
MAHARAJ  
I SHALL  
BEGIN WORK  
ON IT AT  
ONCE

CHANKUN CHOSE TO BUILD A TEMPLE —  
A TEMPLE IN WHICH HE EMPLOYED A  
RARE DEVICE

THE IDOL LIES IN  
MID-AIR! IT'S  
A MIRACLE!

IT IS NO MIRACLE,  
QUEEN RATTA THE  
PULL OF TWO POWER-  
FUL MAGNETS ONE  
IN THE ROOF AND  
THE OTHER IN THE  
FLOOR KEEP THE  
IDOL SUSPENDED  
IN MID-AIR

THE IDOL  
REPRESENTS  
LORD NARASIMHA  
KILLING THE ASURA  
HIRANYAKASHIPU

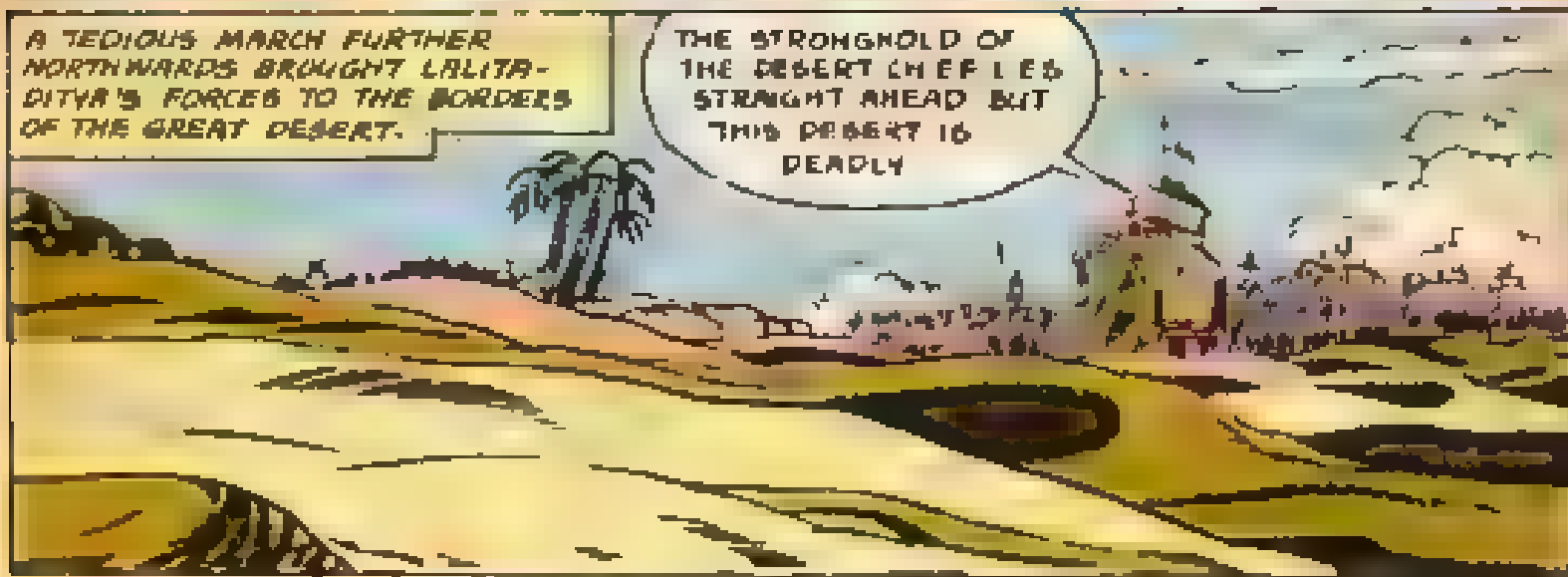
NEITHER ON THE  
EARTH NOR IN THE  
SKY — MARVELLOUS!

FROM KARNATA, LALITADITYA TURNED NORTHWARDS ON THE HOMEWARD MARCH HE ANNEXED THE KINGDOMS OF THE KONKAN AND DWAKA ON THE WESTERN COAST



A TEDIOUS MARCH FURTHER NORTHWARDS BROUGHT LALITADITYA'S FORCES TO THE BORDERS OF THE GREAT DESERT.

THE STRONGHOLD OF THE DESERT CHEFLES STRAIGHT AHEAD BUT THIS DESERT IS DEADLY



WE WILL HAVE TO BRIT IT TO REACH F-S BASE ON THE OTHER SIDE



THAT WILL TAKE US OVER A HUNDRED DAYS THERE IS A SHORT, SAFE, ROUTE RIGHT THROUGH THE DESERT, BUT IT IS NOT KNOWN TO ME

WE WILL LEAVE OUR ELEPHANTS BEHIND WATER IS SCARCE EVEN ALONG THE LONG ROUTE

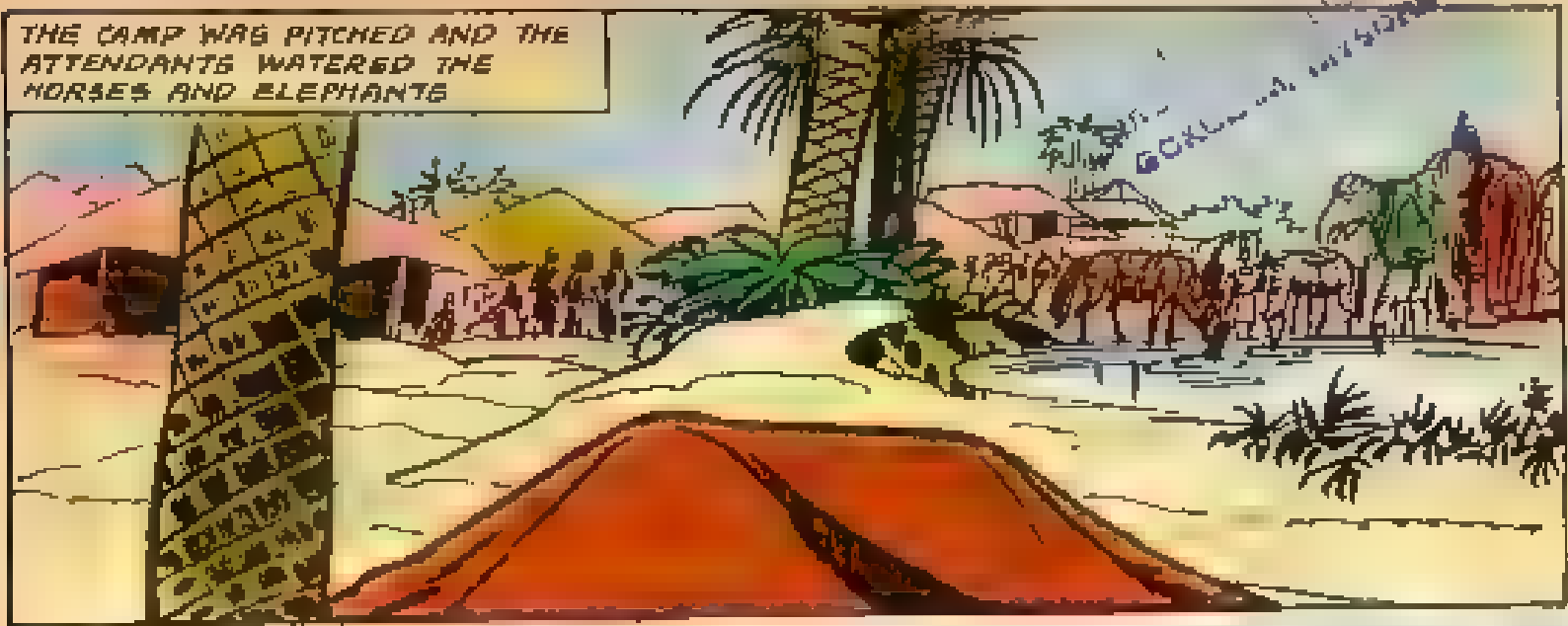


WE HAVE AN ARDUOUS JOURNEY AHEAD OF US WATER THE ANIMALS AND LET THE SOLDIERS TAKE SOME REST

YES MAHARAJ



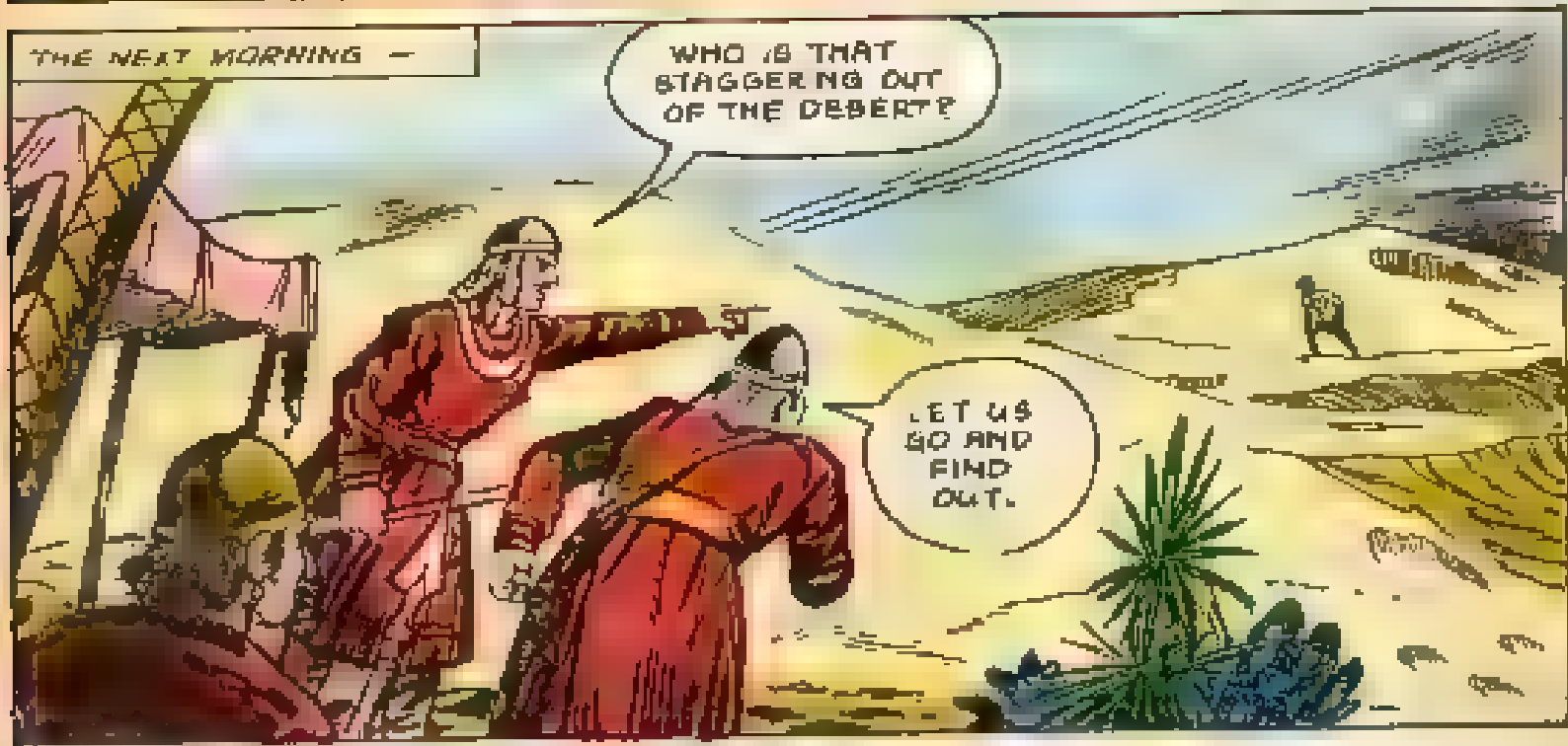
THE CAMP WAS PITCHED AND THE ATTENDANTS WATERED THE HORSES AND ELEPHANTS



THE NEXT MORNING -

WHO IS THAT STAGGERING OUT OF THE DESERT?

LET US GO AND FIND OUT.



WHOSE SOLDIERS ARE YOU?

KING LALITAD TYA'S

TAKE ME TO HIM IMMEDIATELY







LATER -

SHOULD WE  
ACCEPT  
DHARMAPRIYA'S  
OFFER,  
CHANKUN

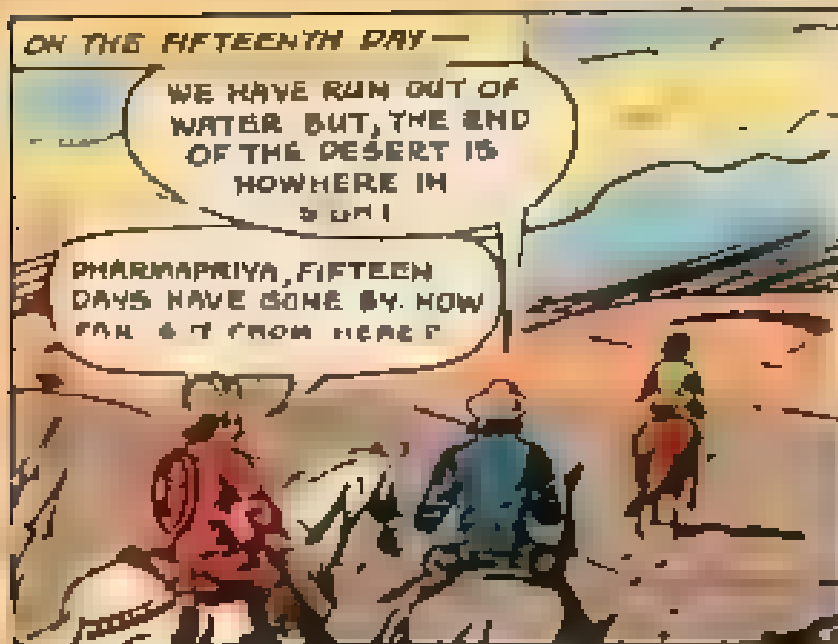
HE IS A  
STRANGER  
I WOULD BE  
CAUTIOUS  
MAHARAJ

HE IS OUT FOR REVENGE I THINK  
WE CAN TRUST HIM MAHARAJ  
BEHIND OUR DO DIERS ARE  
GETTING RESTLESS THE SOONER  
WE FINISH OUR CAMPAIGN  
AND RETURN HOME THE  
BETTER

THAT WAS ALL LALITADITYA NEEDED

ALL RIGHT, WE  
MARCH THROUGH THE  
DESERT WITH  
DHARMAPRIYA KEEPING  
A CLOSE WATCH  
ON HIM

DHARMAPRIYA LED LAL TADITYA'S  
ARMY INTO THE DESERT





IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS THE SCORCHING HEAT OF THE DESERT STARTED TAKING ITS TOLL.

WATER ...  
WATER...

OH GOD, WE WILL  
ALL PERISH HERE

DON'T LOSE  
COURAGE, MY MEN  
IF WE HAVE TO  
DIE, WE WILL DIE  
MARCHING

GOADED BY LALITADITYA HIS ARMY TRUDGED ON  
THEN, AT THE FOOT OF A SAND DUNE, SOMETHING  
CAUGHT LALITADITYA'S ATTENTION.

WHAT IS  
THAT?

DRIED BLADES  
OF GRASS | HERE  
IN THE DESERT?

LALITADITYA HURLED A SPEAR INTO THE GROUND WITH  
ALL THE FORCE HE COULD MUSTER

A FEW PARTICLES OF SAND WERE STUCK TO THE BLADE OF THE SPEAR

HMMM SAND DOES NOT STICK UNLESS IT IS DAMP

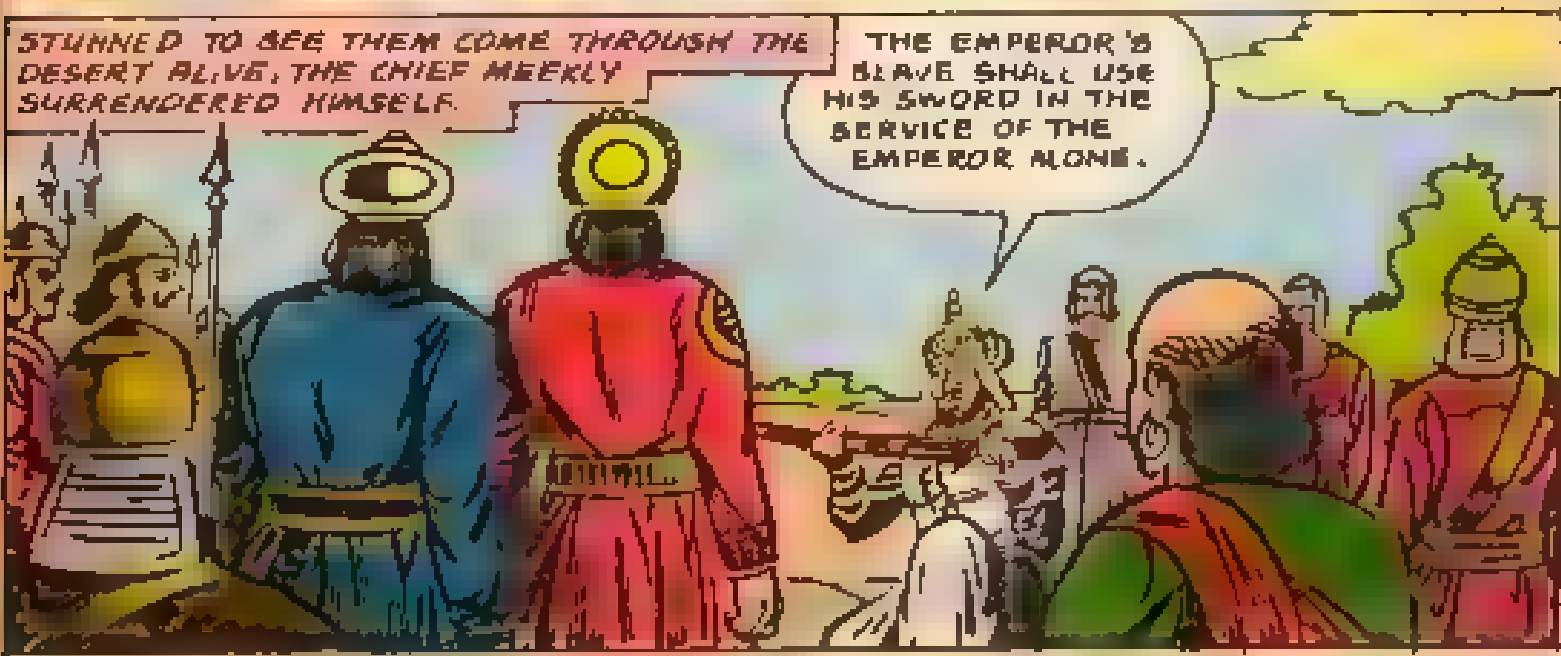
DIG UP THE GROUND AT THIS SPOT

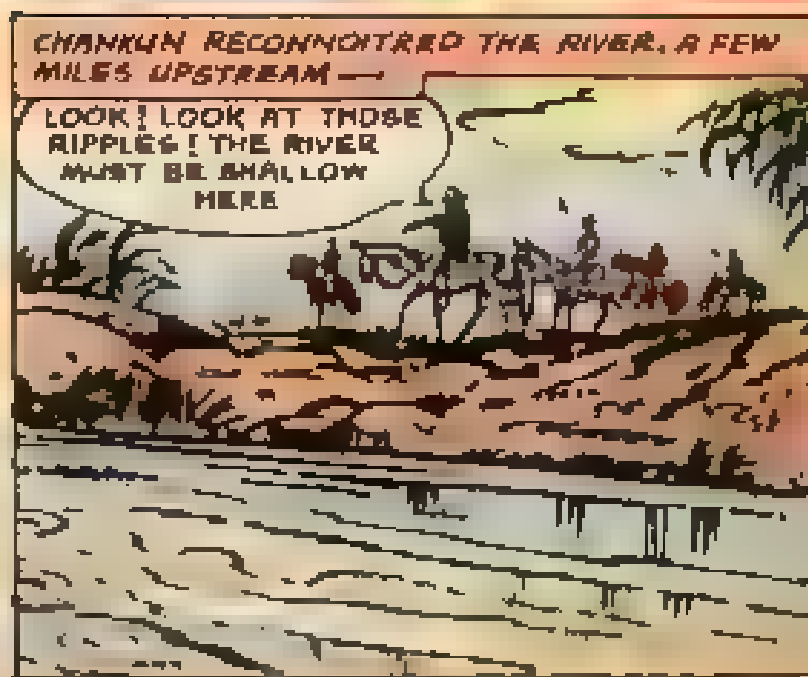
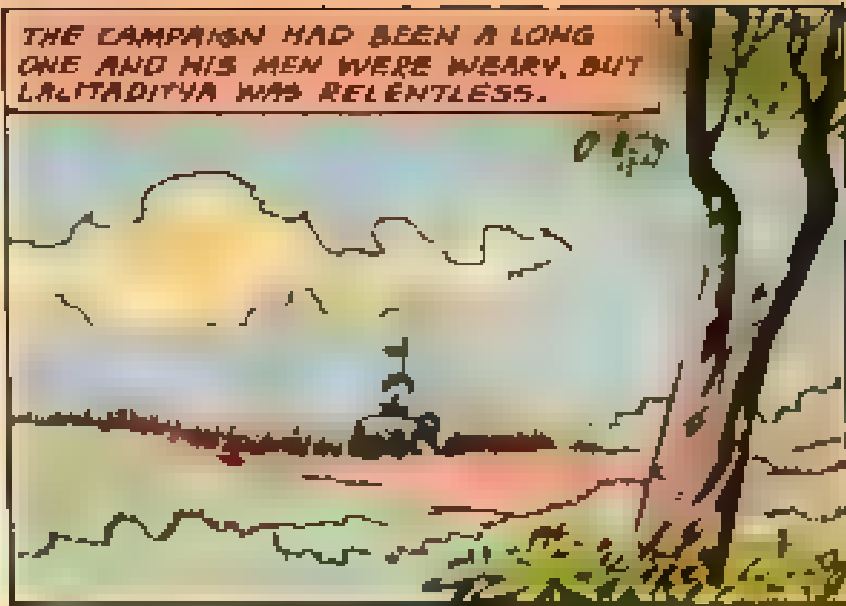


WATER!

WATER!  
WATER!

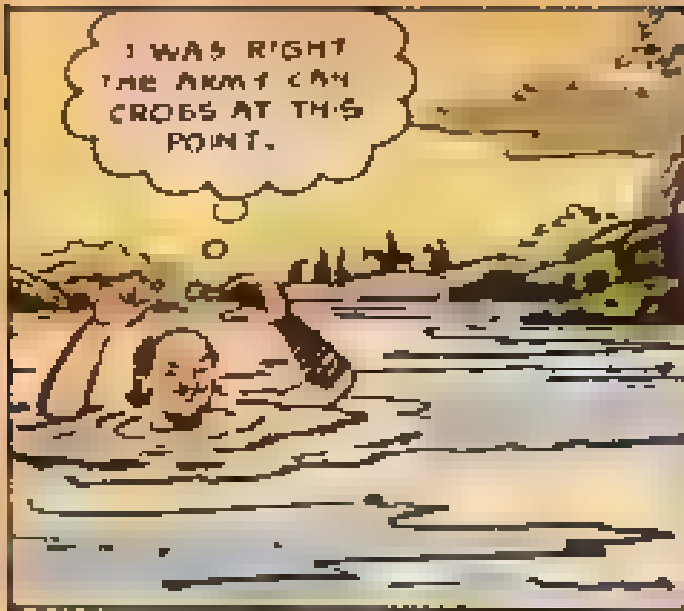
O WATER!  
SWEET  
WATER!



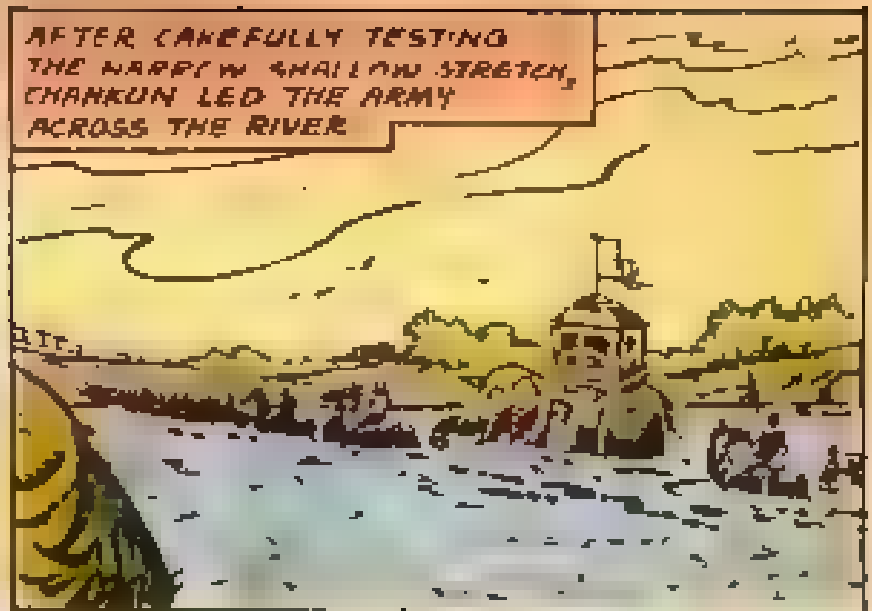




I WAS RIGHT  
THE ARMY CAN  
CROSS AT THIS  
POINT.



AFTER CAREFULLY TESTING  
THE NARROW SHALLOW STRETCH,  
CHANKUN LED THE ARMY  
ACROSS THE RIVER.



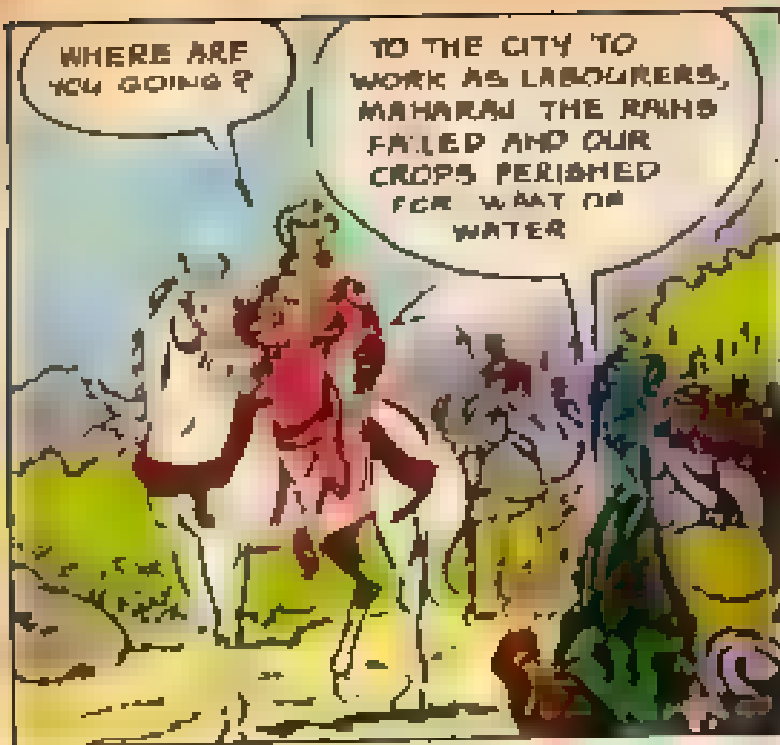
TAKEN BY SURPRISE THE RAJA OFFERED NO  
RESISTANCE WHATSOEVER.



HAVING FULFILLED HIS DREAM  
WITH THE MINIMUM OF BLOODSHED,  
LALITADITYA RETURNED TO  
KASHMIR. BUT IN  
KASHMIR —

THOSE FARMERS  
LOOK ILL-FED,  
CHANKUN





WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

TO THE CITY TO WORK AS LABOURERS, MAHARAJ THE RAINS FAILED AND OUR CROPS PERISHED FOR WANT OF WATER



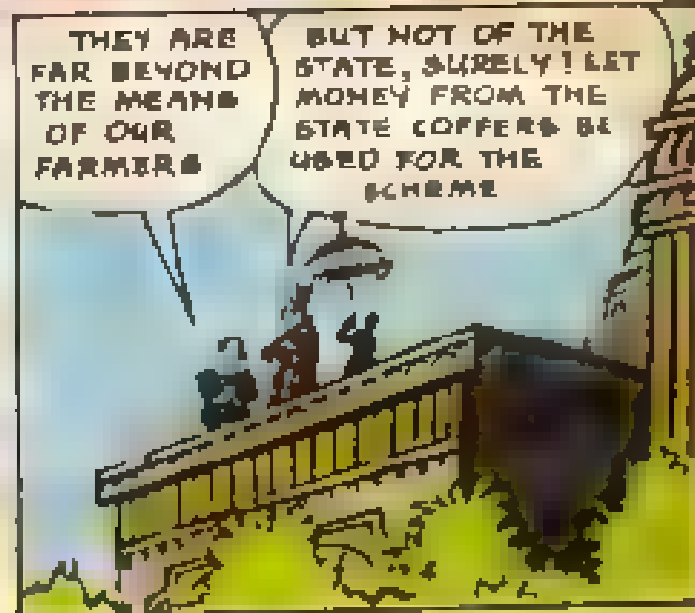
WHY DON'T THE FARMERS IRRIGATE THEIR FIELDS WITH THE WATERS OF OUR RIVERS THEY NEVER GO DRY

BUT THE FIELDS LIE ON A HIGHER LEVEL, MAHARAJ



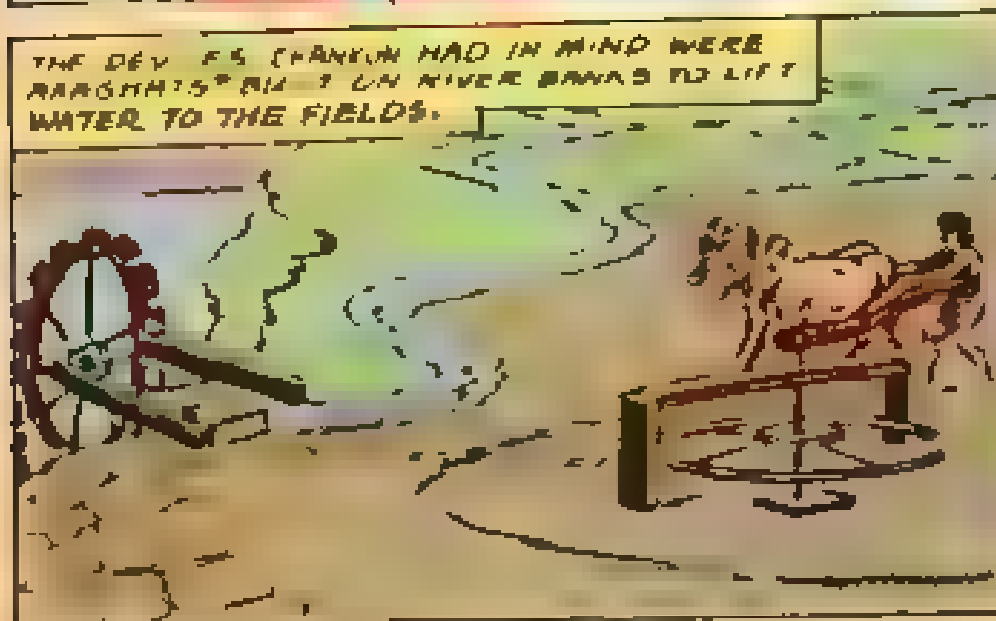
CAN'T THE WATER BE TAKEN UP TO THE FIELDS?

THERE ARE DEVICES FOR THAT, MAHARAJ. HAVE BEEN THEM IN OTHER LANDS. BUT,

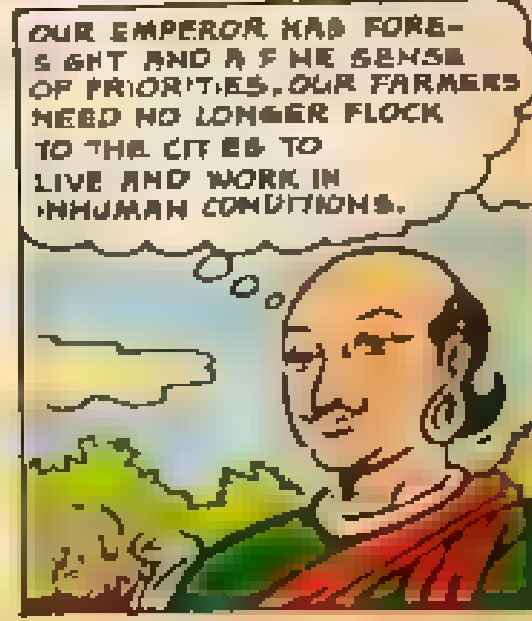


THEY ARE FAR BEYOND THE MEANS OF OUR FARMERS

BUT NOT OF THE STATE, SURELY! LET MONEY FROM THE STATE COFFERS BE USED FOR THE SCHEME



THE DEVILS CHANGIN HAD IN MIND WERE RAAGHAT'S BUILT ON RIVER BANKS TO LIFT WATER TO THE FIELDS.



OUR EMPEROR HAD FORGOTTEN AND A FINE SENSE OF PRIORITIES. OUR FARMERS NEED NO LONGER FLOCK TO THE CITIES TO LIVE AND WORK IN INHUMAN CONDITIONS.

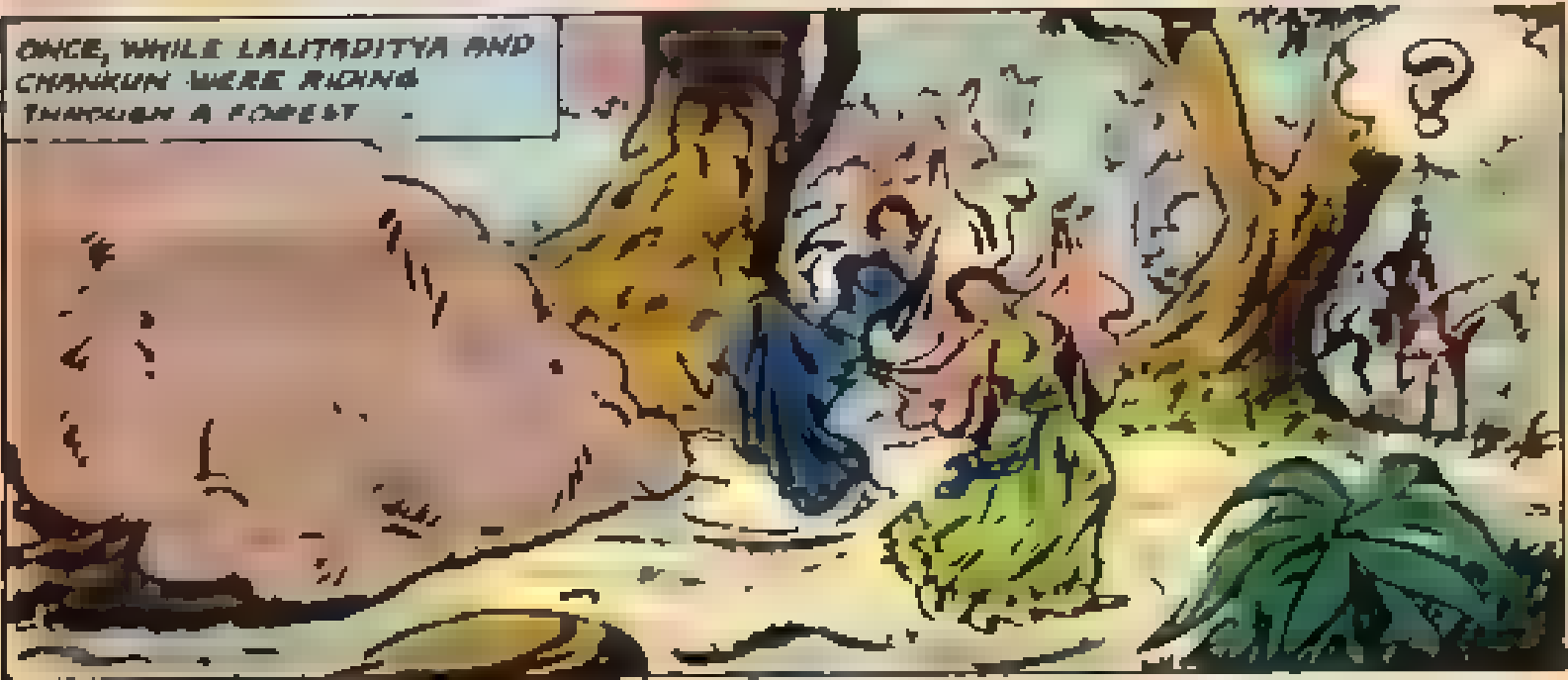
NOR DO THEY HAVE TO  
BOW TO THE WHIM OF  
NATURE

WHAT A FINE CRAFT!  
AGRICULTURE IS THE  
MAINSTAY OF A COUNTRY'S  
ECONOMY AND THE TILLERS  
OF THE SOIL ITS MOST  
PRECIOUS SUBJECTS

I HEARTILY  
AGREE  
MAHARAJ



ONCE, WHILE LALITADITYA AND  
CHANKUN WERE RIDING  
THROUGH A FOREST



WHO ARE  
YOU FAIR  
MAIDENS?  
WHY DO YOU  
DANCE  
HERE?

WE ARE  
SISTERS,  
MAHARAJ



WE DO NOT KNOW WHY  
BUT FOR GENERATIONS  
IT HAS BEEN A RELIGIOUS  
TRADITION IN OUR FAMILY  
TO DANCE AT THIS SPOT

THE ANSWER TO  
THIS MYSTERY  
PROBABLY LIES  
BURIED UNDER  
THAT MOUND.



LALITADIITYA HAD THE MOUND EXCAVATED



AS THE MEN DUG AWAY, THEY UNEARTHED AN ANCIENT TEMPLE.



LALITADIITYA HAD THE TEMPLE RENOVATED AND THE WORSHIP OF THE IDOLS WAS RESUMED IN THE TRADITIONAL FORM



I KNEW THIS COULD BE THE ONLY EXPLANATION FOR THE TRADITION THE DANCERS SPOKE OF THEIR ANCESTORS MUST HAVE BEEN TEMPLE DANCERS, SO THERE HAD TO BE A TEMPLE AROUND THIS SPOT





LATER—

WHAT  
IS IT, MY  
MAN?

BAD NEWS,  
MAHARAJ...

...THE SHARUTTS ARE  
PLANNING TO ATTACK  
US.

THEN WE SHALL  
HAVE TO  
FORESTALL  
THEM!

SO, LALITADITYA MARCHED TO  
THE INHOSPITABLE LAND OF  
TIBET...

...AND, IN ONE FIERCE FORAY, WIPED  
OUT ANY DREAMS OF CONQUEST THEY  
MIGHT HARBOUR.

GLORY TO KING  
LALITADITYA!

LALITADITYA SPENT HIS ENTIRE LIFE IN RELENTLESS CRUSADES TO PROTECT HIS LAND, ITS PEOPLE AND ITS CULTURE.

MAHARAJ, WHEN YOU WERE AWAY IN THE LAND OF THE BHATTAS, MUMMUNI, THE ARAB KING ADVANCED TO PARHOTSAT. NOW HE IS PLANNING TO ATTACK US.

WE SHALL FORESTALL HIM TOO.

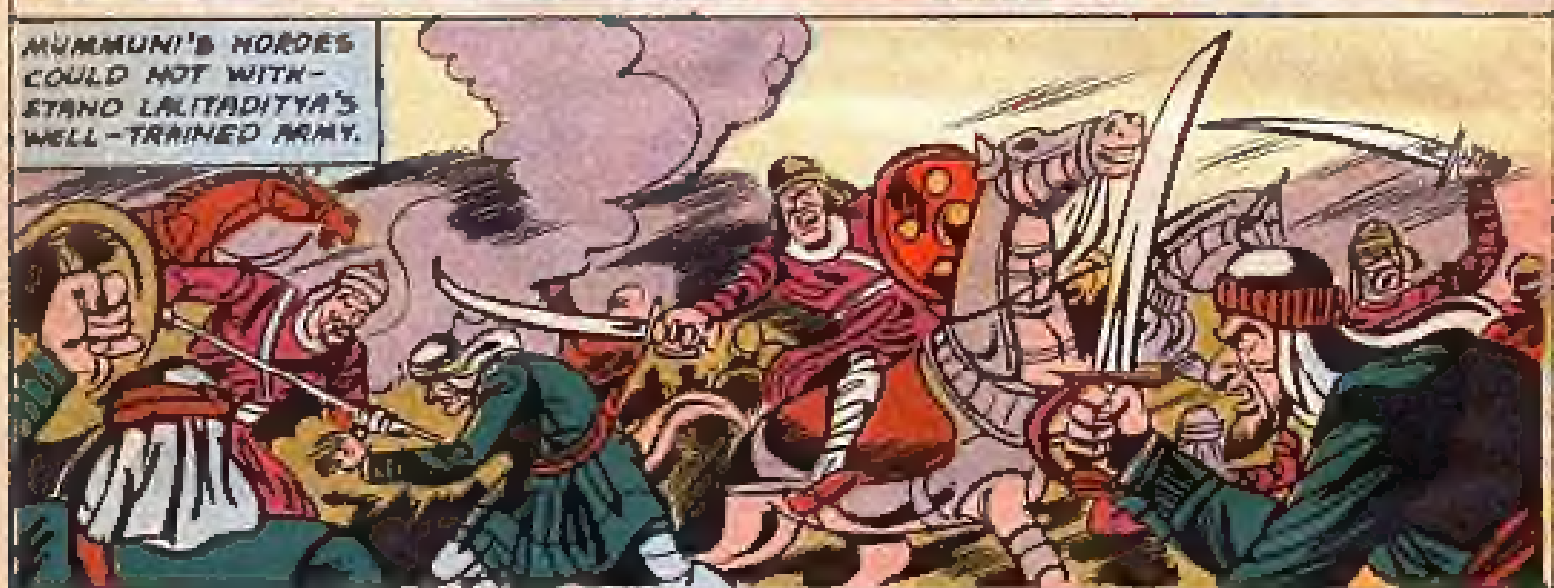


WE SHALL MOUNT AN ATTACK ON HIM, IMMEDIATELY.

YES, MAHARAJ.



MUMMUNI'S HORDES COULD NOT WITHSTAND LALITADITYA'S WELL-TRAINED ARMY.



WE'D BETTER TAKE SHELTER IN THE CITY. THEY WILL NOT ATTACK US THERE. THEY WILL ONLY FIGHT US ON A BATTLE-FIELD.



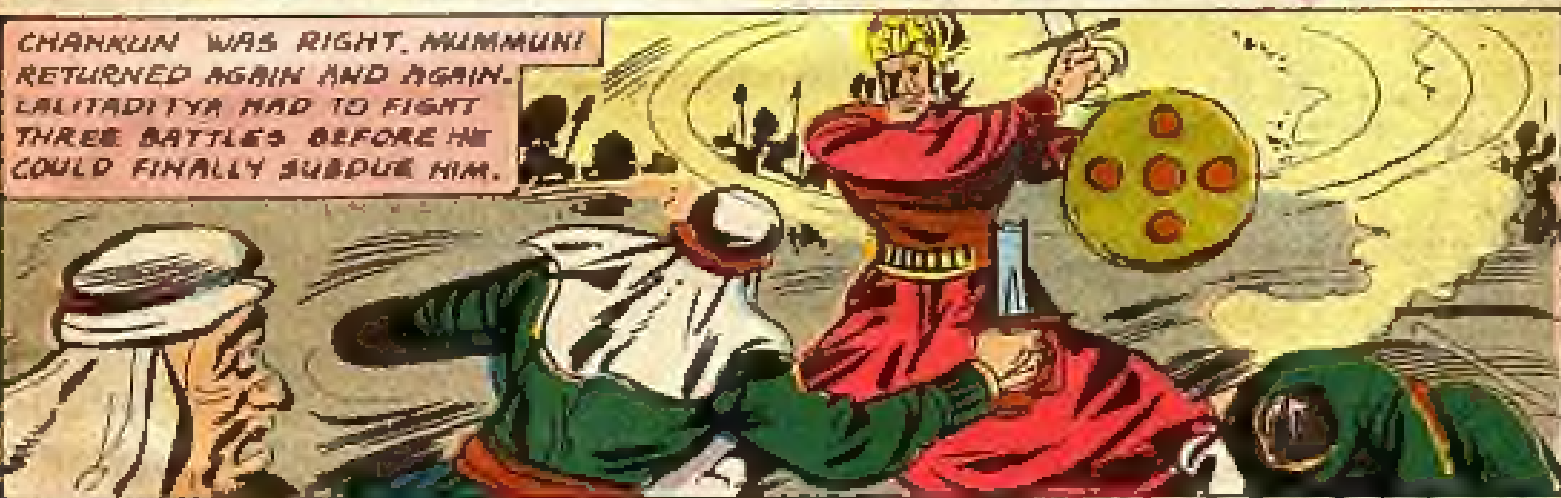
LET THEM GO.  
THEY ARE NOT  
WILLING TO  
FIGHT.

BESIDES A TRUE  
KSHATRIYA DOES NOT  
ATTACK THE DWELLINGS  
OF PEOPLE. OUR DHARMA  
FORBIDS IT.

BUT, IF YOU  
LET MUMMUNI  
ESCAPE, HE  
WILL RETURN.



CHANKUN WAS RIGHT. MUMMUNI  
RETURNED AGAIN AND AGAIN.  
LALITADITYA HAD TO FIGHT  
THREE BATTLES BEFORE HE  
COULD FINALLY SUBDUDE HIM.



AT LAST —

MAHARAJ, YOU MAY NOW  
REST YOUR SWORD. THERE  
ARE NO MORE BATTLES TO  
BE FOUGHT. YOU HAVE  
BROUGHT ALL THE MINOR  
KINGDOMS UNDER YOUR SWAY  
AND HAVE ROUTED THE ALIEN  
INVADERS AND MARAUDERS  
FOR GOOD.

MITRA SHARMA,  
I AM HAPPY FOR  
THE PEACE IN OUR  
LAND. BUT I FEEL  
RESTLESS.



A FEW MONTHS LATER —

NO, A LIFE  
OF REST IS  
NOT FOR ME.





HE SENT FOR HIS MINISTERS.

I HAVE DECIDED TO  
LEAVE ON AN EXPEDITION  
TO EXPLORE THE UNKNOWN.

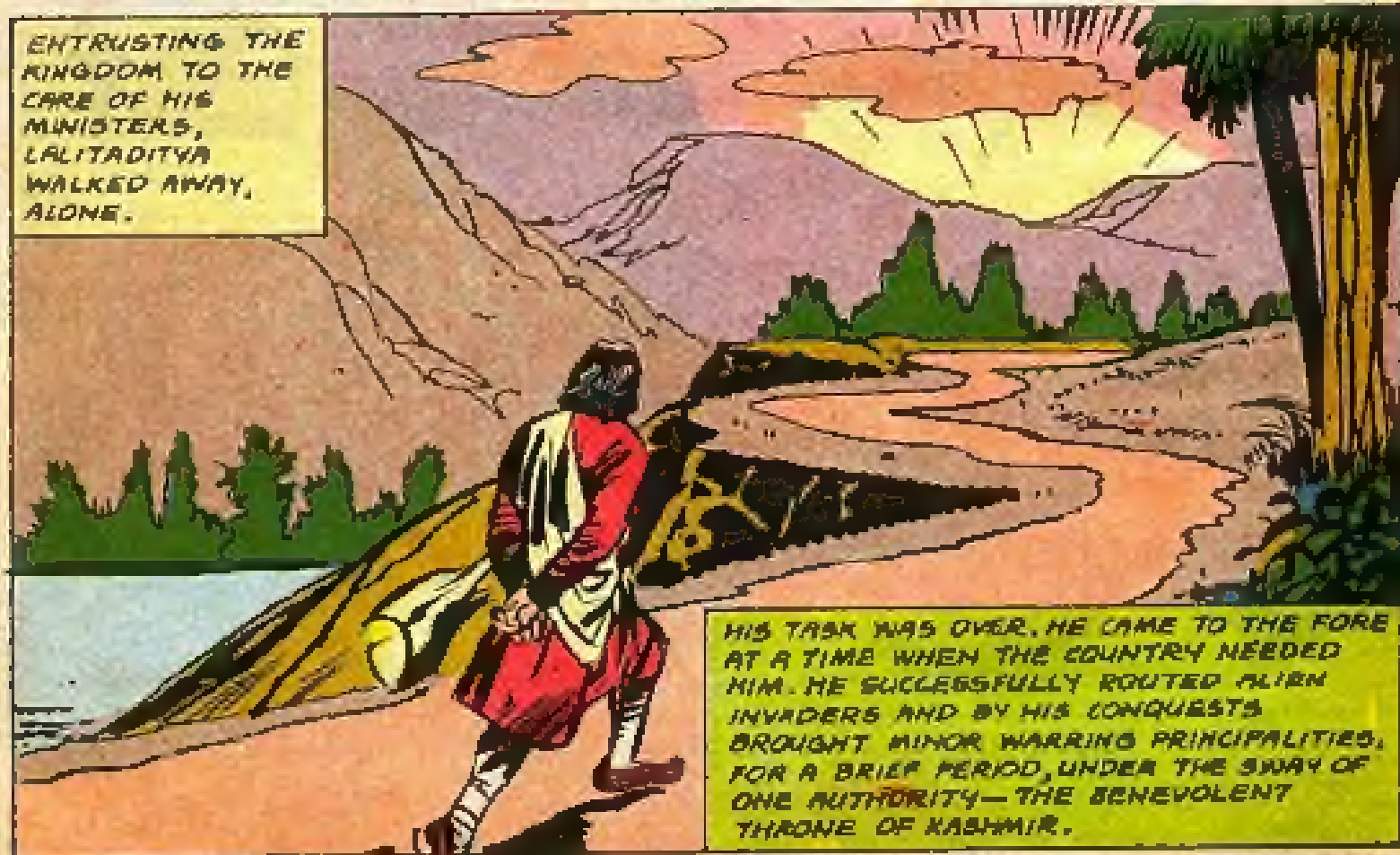
BUT, MAHARAJ!



DON'T TRY TO  
STOP ME, MITRA  
SHARMA. I HAVE  
MADE UP MY  
MIND.



ENTRUSTING THE  
KINGDOM TO THE  
CARE OF HIS  
MINISTERS,  
LALITADITYA  
WALKED AWAY,  
ALONE.



HIS TASK WAS OVER. HE CAME TO THE FORE  
AT A TIME WHEN THE COUNTRY NEEDED  
HIM. HE SUCCESSFULLY ROUTED ALIEN  
INVADERS AND BY HIS CONQUESTS  
BROUGHT MINOR WARRING PRINCIPALITIES,  
FOR A BRIEF PERIOD, UNDER THE SWAY OF  
ONE AUTHORITY—THE BENEVOLENT  
THRONE OF KASHMIR.